

**Transportation Committee
February 23, 2015
House Bill 6821 – Support**

Senator Maynard, Representative Guerrera and members of the Transportation Committee:

My name is Dorota Rabiej and I am a transportation engineer with the Department of Transportation.

Recently, the Connecticut Department of Transportation (DOT) produced a report showing that the cost of utilizing consultants is in many instances double what it would cost to have an in-house state employee do the same work. That same report highlighted short staffing as a key obstacle to bringing more work in-house.

It is easy to see why work in-house can be completed at half the cost of utilizing outside consultants. Staffing on DOT administered construction projects usually entails two inspectors; one being the chief inspector and the second being the sub-inspector, though with some regularity the chief inspector does not have this extra help and is responsible both paperwork and inspecting the field work on his/her own. When a consultant gets the same job, their staff includes resident engineer, office engineer, field inspectors and adman. Two state employees versus at least four or five consultant employees, whose hourly rates are higher than what is paid to state employees within the same job classification. The State of Connecticut is saving the money when DOT is doing the work in-house.

Of course the state has also identified one of the largest obstacles to bringing more work in-house; not having enough state employees to perform the work. We need to hire more employees. We need to hire staff so the older, more experienced employees can pass the years of experience onto the new people before they retire and we lose that invaluable institutional knowledge. At my district when somebody retires (and this is happening frequently) the retiree's work is divided between whoever is left. The positions are not filled with new people, they are lost. And those employees who remain are overloaded with work.

The DOT is capable of doing quality work; we have a group of talented, well-educated and experienced employees who are eager to put their skills to use, but we need additional staffing and support to get the job done.

While we support the overall goals of HB 6821, we have concerns with the proposed language in Section 5 of the bill that would allow the department to hire outside consultants if it is determined that “the department lacks the technical expertise required to perform the design of a project”. In many cases state employees have the necessary expertise for this work. And, in the cases where the department does lack this expertise, from the point of view of quality control, efficiency, and cost-savings it is better to have a process in place to develop this expertise with in-house state employees.

Thank you.

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